

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00
NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-15 NSC-05 OES-06 OMB-01
SCSE-00 SCA-01 DODE-00 COME-00 PA-02 PRS-01 /064 W
-----282331 077915 /73

P R 281645Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL MAZATLAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1128

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX, EGEN, CGEN, PINT, SNAR, DEA

SUBJ: TELEGRAPHIC SUPPLEMENT TO FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHT

REF: MAZATLAN 0113

1. SINALOA'S CRUSADE AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING CONTINUES AT AN ACCELERATED PACE. DURING CONSUL'S VISIT TO GENERAL CERVANTES' CULIACAN HEADQUARTERS ON FEBRUARY 24, GENERAL SHOWED CONSUL THIRTY-FIVE TONS OF MARIHUANA THAT HE SAID HAD BEEN SEIZED WITHIN THE LAST THIRTY HOURS. ENTIRE MILITARY COMPOUND WAS CLOGGED WITH CONFISCATED VEHICLES UNDER NEW POLICY TO REMOVE FROM THE HIGHWAYS ALL VEHICLES WITHOUT LICENSE PLATES OR PROPER DOCUMENTATION ALONG WITH EQUIPMENT SEIZED IN RAIDS. CONSUL FURNISHED THE GENERAL WITH A LIST OF SERIAL NUMBERS IDENTIFYING VEHICLES WHICH HAD BEEN STOLEN FROM U.S. CITIZEN ASSAULT VICTIMS. GENERAL CHECKED LIST OF CARS AGAINST THOSE IN HIS COMPOUND AND ADVISED CONSUL THAT NO VEHICLES WERE IDENTIFIED AS THOSE ON HER LIST. GENERAL SHOWED CONSUL COPY OF LETTER WHICH HE HAD SENT TO HIS HEADQUARTERS REQUESTING THAT CIVILIAN POLICE CHIEFS IN LOS MOCHIS, GUAMUCHIL, ROSARIO, AND MAZATLAN BE REPLACED BY MILITARY PERSONNEL. HIS LETTER ALSO REQUESTED THAT MEXICO CITY SEND A TEAM OF OBSERVERS TO MAKE CRITICAL INSPECTION HIS COMMAND AND OFFER CONTRUCTIVE CRITICISM. HE SUGGESTED THEY

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FOLLOW THESE TACTICS WITH OTHER COMMANDS TO INSURE THAT THERE BE NO DECELERATION IN THE TASK CONFRONTING THEM. HE SAID HE HAD ADEQUATE MANPOWER BUT AT THE MOMENT HE LACKED ONLY TWO HELICOPTERS TO PROVIDE BETTER COVERAGE FOR HIS TERRITORY. GENERAL CERVANTES OBSERVED THAT PEOPLE HAD BEEN TELLING HIM THAT SINALOA SEEMED MORE TRANQUIL, AND THAT CRIME HAD LESSENED.

COMMENT: WHEREAS PREVIOUSLY THERE WERE A GREAT NUMBER OF AUTO-MOBILES ON SINALOA'S HIGHWAYS WITHOUT LICENSE PLATES, SUCH VEHICLES ARE FAST DISAPPEARING, WHICH WOULD LEND SUPPORT TO THE GENERAL'S AVOWED DETERMINATION TO CONTROL DRUG TRAFFICKING AND RID THE HIGHWAYS OF ILLEGAL VEHICLES. THE CONSUL ALSO OBSERVED THE ARMY PATROL PRESENCE THROUGHOUT HER TRIP ON HIGHWAY 15 FROM MAZATLAN TO LOS MOCHIS.

2. THE PRESS THROUGHOUT SINALOA ARE NOW OPTIMISTICALLY PREDICTING THAT THE TOURIST SLUMP IS GONE FOREVER. THE NEWSPAPERS WHO WERE ATRIBUTING THE TOURIST SLUMP TO A UNITED STATES' BOYCOTT AGAINST SINALOA ARE NOW SAYING THAT THE BOYCOTT IS OVER AND THAT SINALOA IS PROVIDING SECURITY ON ITS HIGHWAYS. ONE REPORTER ASKED THE CONSUL WHY THE U.S. HAD BEEN CONDUCTING A BOYCOTT AGAINST TOURISM IN SINALOA, AND THE CONSUL CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT THE U.S. HAD CONDUCTED SUCH A CAMPAIGN. SHE STATED THAT THE UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY THAT SINALOA HAD RECEIVED IN THE U.S. PRESS WAS A RESULT OF U.S. PAPER INTERVIEWING ASSAULT VICTIMS. A LA PAZ, BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR PAPER STATED THE ANTI-TOURISM CAMPAIGN AGAINST MEXICO ENDED WITH THE CAPTURE OF THE TWO MURDERERS OF THREE AMERICANS WHO WERE KILLED IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER OF 1976.

3. IN CONTRAST TO THE PREDICTIONS FOR AN IMPROVED TOURIST SEASON IN SINALOA, THE TOURIST TRAFFIC IN BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR HAS REACHED ROCK BOTTOM. WHEN THE CONSUL CALLED ON THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER EDITOR ON FEBRUARY 21, HE TOLD HER THAT SOME AIRPLANE FLIGHTS HAD BEEN SUSPENDED AND THAT FERRY SCHEDULES HAD ALSO BEEN GREATLY CURTAILED. CARLOS MORGAN, EDITOR OF EL SUDCALIFORNIANO, TOLD THE CONSUL THAT AT A RECENT MEETING AT THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE UNCLASSIFIED

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TO WHICH SENATORS FROM SINALOA AND OTHER STATES HAD BEEN INVITED, THAT THERE WAS A DISCUSSION REGARDING TREATMENT OF TOURISTS AND SERVICES PROVIDED TO THEM AND ITS RELATION TO THE SLUMP. HE SAID THAT A GOOD TOURIST PROGRAM DID NOT INCLUDE ONLY SHOWING THE NATURAL BEAUTIES OF A PLACE BUT THE PROVIDING OF EFFICIENT SERVICE, GOOD TREATMENT, SECURITY AND A FAIR VALUE FOR THE MONEY. HE ADDED THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY RESTS WITH EVERYONE TO SEE THAT THE TOURISTS RECEIVED THE TREATMENT THAT WILL KEEP THEM COMING BACK. HE WENT ON TO POINT OUT THE FLAWS IN THE LA PAZ ECONOMY -- EXHORBITANT HOTEL RATES, POOR FOOD, POOR QUALITY SERVICES, HIGH PRICED TAXIS, ETC.

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SCSE-00 SCA-01 DODE-00 COME-00 PA-02 PRS-01 /064 W
-----282331 080573 /73

P R 281715Z FEB 77
FM AMCONSUL MAZATLAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1129
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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4. ENTIRE RANCHES IN THE SINALOAN MOUNTAINS ARE BEING DESERTED, AS THE ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGN CONTINUES TO FORCE THE CAMPESINOS TO LEAVE THE LAND. THEY ARE NOW CONVERGING ON CULIACAN LOOKING FOR WORK AND SWELLING THE UNEMPLOYMENT ROLLS OF THAT CITY. THE REDUCTION IN BUYING POWER THAT THESE PEOPLE HAD FROM THE EASY MONEY OBTAINED FROM GROWING POPPIES HAS HAD A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

5. ONE NEWSPAPER CARRIES A COLUMN IN WHICH PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO IS REPORTED TO HAVE TELEPHONED GOVERNOR CALDERON AND ORDERED HIM TO SOLVE THE CRIMES OF MURDER OF AMERICANS ON SINALOAN HIGHWAYS. THE ARTICLE STATED THAT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, ON THE STRENGTH OF THIS CALL HAD TAKEN OVER AND THAT CULPRITS INVOLVED IN THE MURDERS OF THREE AMERICANS HAD BEEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. THE ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED THAT THERE IS FRICTION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNOR CALDERON. COMMENT: TWO INDIVIDUALS ARE PRESENTLY JAILED IN CULIACAN AND CHARGED WITH THE MURDERS OF FREDERICK A. BACHER, JOHN GHARST AND HIS DAUGHTER LORA LEE BROWN.

6. ON FEBRUARY 23, WHILE IN CULIACAN, THE CONSUL INAUGURATED A MOON ROCK EXHIBIT WITH USIA REPRESENTATIVE ARTHUR DIGGLE OF THE GUADALAJARA CONGEN. LIVE TELEVISION INTERVIEW FURTHER PUBLICIZED MOON ROCK EXHIBITION.

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Message Attributes

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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MAZATLAN 113
Retention: 0
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3289533
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TELEGRAPHIC SUPPLEMENT TO FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHT
TAGS: CASC, EGEN, CGEN, PINT, SNAR, MX, DEA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/648517c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009